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MBK-0031
5 November 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Monthly Report - Bangkok Bureau - October 1981

I. GENERAL

What with October being the month for coups in Thailand, rumors abounded, particularly over the weekends, as everyone, including experienced observers of the local political scene, tensed for the traditional Thai-style change of government. Late in the month, bomb blasts at two government buildings, unusual troop movements, surveillance and searches of the homes of the young Turks--leaders of the unsuccessful April coup--did nothing to dispel the rumors or the tense atmosphere which on one occasion prompted the bureau to institute an open speaker watch of Thai radio and television. The debate no longer centers on how long the Prem government will last, but on which weekend the coup will take place.

II. OPERATIONS

A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. Coverage responsibility for Manila FEBC, both its international and domestic broadcasts, was returned to [] during the month as the latter's reception improved. However, Bangkok Bureau retained responsibility for Hong Kong AFP Philippines coverage taken over from Okinawa.

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B. Lateral Services

1. At the request of the Embassy's INS officer, the bureau began forwarding to his office all items relating to the refugee issue. The material is hand-carried daily to the Embassy mailroom for distribution.

III. ADMINISTRATION

A. Personnel

1. An 8.9 percent cost of living increase was granted all local employees effective 4 October. An extra annual cash grant of baht 1,947 per employee was also granted, making the

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cumulative pay hike more than 9 percent. The increase was based on a spot check survey of local wages; a full wage survey is scheduled for spring/summer 1982.

✓ 2. A recruitment trip to Australia for a fourth Cambodian monitor failed to identify a candidate strong enough to offer immediate employment. Further attempts are underway through London Bureau to test the British and French markets for candidates and through newspaper advertisements in New Zealand.

3. On 9 October, Chief of Operations [] presented the bureau chief with a Unit Citation awarded the bureau for its performance during the April Fool's Day Coup. On the same occasion, he presented Certificates of Distinction with cash emoluments to

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particularly exceptional performances during the April events.

IV. VISITS

1. Sam Westgate and John Ohta, new ICA officers in the Public Affairs Office, visited the bureau on 1 October for a briefing and walkthrough.

2. Headquarters safety officer [] visited the bureau 5-6 October and conducted a thorough safety inspection. The few minor problems he discovered have since been corrected.

3. Chief of Operations [] visited the bureau on 7 and 8 October during his Far East management inspection trip. As predicted, the annual October floods greeted his arrival, delaying somewhat a cocktail buffet given in his honor by the bureau chief.

4. Far East regional engineer [] visited the Bureau 16-21 October.

V. COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

The Mission's new leadership team arrived during the month. DCM Stapleton Roy and family arrived on the 1st, while Ambassador John Günther Dean and wife arrived on the 16th. A Mission-wide welcoming party was held on the Chancellery grounds 21 October.

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Acting Chief, Bangkok Bureau, FBIS

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